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Message Text

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10
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 SAM-01 EB-07 IO-13 /090 W
---------- 028092
R 281150Z NOV 76
FM AMEMBASSY DOHA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2031
CNFO RUQMBI/AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI 0804
AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
AMEMBASSY MUSCAT
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L DOHA 1264

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR QA TC BA MU KU IR IZ
SUBJ: GULF FOREIGN MINISTERS CONFERENCE: QATARI VIEWS

1. DURING NOV 27 CONVERSATION WITH QATARI FOREIGN MINISTER SHAYKH SUHAYM BIN HAMAD AL THANI, I REMARKED THAT PRESS REPORTING INDICATED THAT NOV 25-26 GULF FOREIGN MINISTERS CONFERENCE IN MUSCAT ACCOMPLISHED VERY LITTLE.

2. SUHAYM, WHO HEADED GOQ DELEGATION IN MUSCAT, RESPONDED THAT IT COULD BE SAID THAT CONCLAVE HAD NO RPT NO POSITIVE RESULTS; HOWEVER, ACCORDING SUHAYM, MERE FACT THAT CONFERENCE TOOK PLACE, INCLUDED IRAN, AND THAT IRAQIS EVENTUALLY DECIDED TO TAKE PART, WAS BY ITSELF A MAJOR STEP FORWARD IN RELATIONS AMONG GULF STATES.

3. SUHAYM COMMENTED THAT PRES BUILD-UP INDICATING THAT PRINCIPAL SUBJECT TO BE DISCUSSED WAS GULF SECURITY WAS OFF THE MARK. IT WAS TRUE THAT A PRIMARY FOCUS OF DISCUSSION WAS QUESTION
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OF NAVIGATION IN THE GULF, WITH IRAN ADVOCATING INNOCENT PASSAGE

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VERSUS IRAQI VIEW OF FREE NAVIGATION. SUHAYM SAID IRANIANS MADE IT QUITE CLEAR THAT THEIR CHIEF CONCERN WAS SECURITY OF HORMUZ STRAITS, BUT THAT DISCUSSION WAS AFFABLE AND OPPOSING VIEWS EXCHANGED IN CORDIAL ATMOSPHERE. I ASKED SUHAYM HOW QATAR AND OTHER GULF STATES LINED UP IN DEBATE ON FREE NAVIGATION VERSUS INNOCENT PASSAGE, AND REMINDED HIM OF USG'S GENERAL POSITION ON ESSENTIALITY OF FREE PASSAGE THROUGH INTERNATIONAL STRAITS. HE DECLINED TO BE SPECIFIC, SAYING THAT THIS ISSUE WOULD HAVE TO BE RESOLVED AMONG AREA'S BIG POWERS, I.E. SAUDI ARABIA, IRAQ AND IRAN, AND THEN SMALLER STATES WOULD ACCOMMODATE. (ANOTHER GOQ OFFICIAL WHO TOOK PART IN CONVERSATIONS DURING IRANIAN FOREIGN MINISTER KHALATBARI'S NOV 23-24 VISIT TO QATAR HAS TOLD US THAT KHALATBARI PRESSED HARD FOR GOQ AGREEMENT ON INNOCENT PASSAGE DOCTRINE FOR GULF. OFFICIAL INDICATED THAT QATARIS WERE SYMPATHETIC TO THIS IRANIAN VIEW ALTHOUGH IT WAS EVIDENT GOQ DID NOT RPT NOT UNDERSTAND FULL RAMIFICATIONS OF THIS.)

4. SUHAYM SUMMED UP, STATING THAT CONFERENCE WAS A SIGNIFICANT HAPPENING AND OPENED WAY TO FOLLOW-UP MEETINGS WHICH HOPEFULLY WOULD PRODUCE MEANINGFUL COOPERATION AMONG GULF STATES IN MANY FIELDS. HE REMARKED PARTICULARLY ON LOW-KEY IRANIAN POSTURE AT MEERING WITH IRANIANS APPARENTLY GOING OUT OF THEIR WAY TO LEAVE IMPRESSION THAT THEY WILLING TO GO THE EXTRA MILE TO ASSURE HARMONIOUS RELATIONS WITH THEIR ARAB NEIGHBORS. (COMMENT: ARAB GULF, ANYONE?)
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TAGS: PFOR, QA, TC, BA, MU, KU, IR, IZ, (HAMAD AL THANI, SHAKYH SUHAYM BIN)
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